



## Appendix 3 – Sheltering Protocols

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### I. Introduction

The choice of public shelters for a specific evacuation is a county and state emergency management decision in coordination with DHR and ARC. County and municipal authorities will open shelters based on a variety of circumstances including season, storm intensity, storm direction, and availability of qualified shelter operators. Furthermore, shelter designation may change based on new construction, structure modifications, ownership changes or other factors impacting shelter selection.

Sheltering of evacuees may occur in Georgia without a tropical cyclone directly impacting the state as was observed with Hurricane Katrina (2005). The combined evacuations from Hurricane Katrina (2005) and Hurricane Rita (2005) created a sheltering and housing effort for over 49,000 individuals. Hurricane Floyd (1999) moved northward parallel to the Atlantic Coast causing mass evacuations from Southern Florida to North Carolina resulting in over 3 million people evacuating including over 350,000 people from the Georgia Coast. This mass evacuation necessitated the opening of 82 shelters in Georgia for roughly 35,000 people.

Upon the issuance of evacuation orders within Georgia or the influx of evacuees from other states, the State Operations Center (SOC) will initiate OPCON 1 which would initiate sheltering operations.

### II. Authorities

Under the GEOP ESF 6 Mass Care and ESF 8 Health and Medical Services, the primary state agency for the identification and approval of shelters in Georgia is the DFCS. The ARC – through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – works in concert with DFCS, DHR Division of Public Health (DPH) and local EMAs to identify and approve shelters. Other coordination partners may include: GEMA Field Coordinators, Department of Labor (DOL) Rehabilitation Services, DHR Environmental Health and school systems officials.

Guidelines for shelter selection criterion have been established in ARC publication 4496: Guidelines for Hurricane Shelter Selection (July 1992).

### III. Coordination

#### A. Federal

Once the threat of a hurricane making landfall anywhere in the U.S. is identified, FEMA hosts daily VTC calls. These VTC conference calls bring together federal entities involved in disaster response and states that may be



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impacted. Hurricane Katrina (2005) demonstrated that evacuees may impact states at great distances from the point of landfall. The impacts to Georgia by evacuees from Hurricane Katrina (2005) reemphasized a need to be involved in federal level regional coordination efforts even when the threat is not directly posed to Georgia.

### B. State

From the initiation of OPGON 4, coordination efforts are undertaken with neighboring states – Alabama, Florida and South Carolina. When OPGON 3 is initiated, conference calls with the ELT are held. On these ELT conference calls, evacuations being considered or ongoing evacuations are discussed by each state. These calls assist with the determination of impacts to Georgia by evacuees from other states and affect decisions about sheltering needs.

When evacuation orders are issued in Georgia or evacuations from other states begin to impact the state, OPGON 1 is initiated. During this phase, evacuation congregate shelters are opened.

Representatives under ESF-6 Mass Care and ESF-8 Health and Medical Services (DHR, DFCS, DPH and ARC) will work in concert with their EOC's and local EMA EOC's to identify locations where shelters are needed and coordinate the opening of shelters.

### C. Local

Once evacuees begin to impact an inland county and the need to open an evacuation congregate shelter has been identified, coordination efforts with local DPH, ARC and the SOC begins. The local EMA will contact the local ARC chapter and DPH and request the opening of a shelter. ARC will coordinate with regional ARC for approval which is then coordinated with local EMA, DPH and ARC.

From the initiation of OPGON 4, conference calls with threatened areas begin. Conference calls to threatened areas are held to discuss protective actions. Georgia based evacuations are discussed and coordinated. Information derived in these calls assist with the determination of sheltering needs within the state.

### D. Volunteer Organizations

ARC will act as the primary agency to coordinate response efforts with volunteer organizations such as Salvation Army and the Volunteers Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD).



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### IV. State Sheltering Strategy

In Georgia, the threat of a tropical cyclone making landfall along either the Atlantic or Gulf Coasts will likely cause mass evacuations – either from Georgia or elsewhere – which would necessitate sheltering.

The basic approach to the State sheltering strategy is to begin opening shelters in high populous communities which are in a safe proximity to threatened areas (primary communities) and then open shelters further inland (alternate communities) as needed.

Once shelters in primary areas begin to reach 50% capacity, shelters in alternate areas are placed on standby. When capacities reach 75%, shelters in alternate communities are opened.

The purpose of opening shelters within the proximity of the threatened areas is to decrease traffic volumes on evacuation routes and minimize travel time. This approach would minimize the risk of problems that may occur on roadways. During the evacuations that occurred in response to the threat of Hurricane Floyd (1999), problems occurred that resulted in loss of life. This same occurrence was observed during the evacuations associated with Hurricane Katrina (2005). Citizens with health concerns are especially vulnerable to health related complications from extended travel times.

To minimize staffing requirements placed upon ARC for sheltering efforts, it is desirable to open shelters in higher capacity facilities. These typically exist in larger or more populous communities. Opening shelters in larger communities maximizes the availability of resources to evacuating populations as well. Therefore, high population communities in safe proximity to threatened areas have been identified as primary sheltering communities and high populous communities further inland have been identified as alternate sheltering communities.

Table 1 presents the primary and alternate sheltering communities during an Atlantic Coast threat and Table 2 presents these for a Gulf Coast threat.

Table 1. Primary and alternate sheltering communities for an Atlantic Coast threat.

Primary	Alternate
Augusta (Richmond County)	Baxley (Appling County)
Douglas (Coffee County)	Claxton (Evans County)
Dublin (Laurens County)	Metter (Candler County)
Macon (Bibb County)	Perry (Houston County)
Statesboro (Bulloch County)	Sylvania (Screven County)



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Tifton (Tift County)	Vidalia (Toombs County)
Waycross (Ware County)	

Table 2. Primary and alternate sheltering communities for a Gulf Coast threat.

Primary	Alternate
Albany (Dougherty County)	Bainbridge (Decatur County)
Macon (Bibb County)	Cordele (Crisp County)
Thomasville (Thomas County)	Cairo (Grady County)
Tifton (Tift County)	Moultrie (Colquitt County)
Valdosta (Lowndes County)	Perry (Houston County)

### V. Shelter Database

DFCS has the primary responsibility for maintaining a statewide shelter database. As of April, 2006 a total of 1645 congregate shelters have been identified within the state with a total capacity of 533,865. A total of 7 special needs shelters have been identified with a capacity of 1105. Table 3 lists locations and capacities of special needs shelters. Table 4 lists locations for pet friendly shelters.

Table 3. Special needs shelters locations and capacities.

County	Number	Capacity
Bibb	1	318
Carroll	3	430
Lamar	1	57
Lincoln	1	100
Meriwether	1	200
Total	7	1105

Table 4. Pet friendly shelter locations.

County	Facility
Bibb	Macon Centreplex
Bibb	Macon State College
Carroll	University of West Georgia
Clarke	University of Georgia
Coffee	South Georgia College
Columbia	Columbia Co. Emergency Services
Houston	Georgia National Fairgrounds
Richmond	Augusta Eschange Club Fairgrounds
Thomas	Thomasville Exchange Fairgrounds
Ware	Okefenokee Fairgrounds



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A shelter database is maintained by DFCS and is regularly updated and posted on the GEMA website: <http://www.gema.state.ga.us>. Additional pet friendly shelter information can be found on the Georgia Department of Agriculture (DOA) website: <http://agr.state.ga.us>. DOA will be contacted prior to opening any animal shelters so that they can verify facility availability in advance.

### VI. Shelter Demand

Public shelter demand is defined as the number of evacuees expected to seek public shelter and is a percentage of the vulnerable population. Post storm assessments and behavioral studies have shown that the percentage of people evacuating to shelters ranges from five to fifteen percent. Research conducted for the Georgia Hurricane Evacuation Study (HES) in the Shelter Analysis provides estimates of shelter demand for varying intensities of topical cyclone per coastal county. Estimates of public shelter demand are presented in Table 5 for low tourist occupancy and Table 6 for high tourist occupancy.

Table 5. Estimates of Shelter Demand based on tropical cyclone intensity per coastal county with low tourist occupancy.

County	Total Evacuating People *	Evacuees to Shelters	Vehicles to Shelters
<b>Chatham</b>			
Category 1 – 2	124,474	10,016	5,038
Category 3 – 4	257,698	29,578	14,909
Category 5	257,698	29,578	14,909
<b>Bryan</b>			
Category 1 – 2	12,563	1,443	694
Category 3 – 4	20,652	2,605	1,253
Category 5	26,828	3,531	1,699
<b>Liberty</b>			
Category 1 – 2	18,431	2,161	747
Category 3 – 4	27,206	3,443	1,191
Category 5	61,999	8,661	2,997
<b>McIntosh</b>			
Category 1 – 2	8,426	568	245
Category 3 – 4	10,691	844	357
Category 5	12,227	1,075	451
<b>Glynn</b>			
Category 1 – 2	46,966	3,162	1,462
Category 3 – 4	79,281	7,917	3,474
Category 5	83,065	8,485	3,714



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<b>Camden</b>			
Category 1 – 2	28,488	3,090	1,237
Category 3 – 4	43,037	5,202	2,016
Category 5	55,612	7,088	2,712

\* Based on the 1990 Census data and Georgia Tech derived 2000 predictions from the Georgia HES.

Table 6. Estimates of Shelter Demand based on tropical cyclone intensity per coastal county with high tourist occupancy.

County	Total Evacuating People *	Evacuees to Shelters	Vehicles to Shelters
<b>Chatham</b>			
Category 1 – 2	145,987	10,232	5,114
Category 3 – 4	284,401	29,844	15,003
Category 5	284,401	29,844	15,003
<b>Bryan</b>			
Category 1 - 2	14,212	1,460	700
Category 3 - 4	22,932	2,629	1,261
Category 5	29,108	3,555	1,708
<b>Liberty</b>			
Category 1 - 2	19,914	2,176	753
Category 3 - 4	29,121	3,462	1,197
Category 5	63,914	8,681	3,004
<b>McIntosh</b>			
Category 1 - 2	10,907	592	252
Category 3 - 4	13,935	876	368
Category 5	15,472	1,107	462
<b>Glynn</b>			
Category 1 - 2	63,553	3,327	1,523
Category 3 - 4	97,000	8,093	3,537
Category 5	100,784	8,661	3,777
<b>Camden</b>			
Category 1 - 2	31,468	3,122	1,249
Category 3 - 4	46,904	5,242	2,030
Category 5	59,478	7,126	2,727

\* Based on the 1990 Census data and Georgia Tech derived 2000 predictions from the Georgia HES.